

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION
MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2013
MEADOW EDGE/WEST SAYVILLE GOLF COURSE
WEST SAYVILLE, NEW YORK**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Miles Borden	Chairman, Town of Smithtown
Gilbert Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Kathleen Gooding, Ph.D.	Trustee, Town of Shelter Island
Dawn Hopkins	Vice Chair, Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Peter Leis	Trustee, Town of Islip
Alexander McKay	Trustee, Town of Huntington
William Shilling	Presiding Officer Representative
William B. Sickles	Trustee, Town of Southampton
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton

ABSENT

Christopher DiGregorio	Trustee, Town of Southold
Debra Kolyer	Member of the Board
Terrence Pearsall	Member of the Board
VACANT	Trustee, Town of Babylon
VACANT	Member at Large

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Greg Dawson	Commissioner
Nick Gibbons	Principal Environmental Analyst
Colleen Hofmeister	Principal Contracts Examiner
Richard Martin	Director of Historic Services
Barbara Rittman	Senior Clerk Typist

GUESTS

Honorable Jay Schneiderman	Legislator
Tom Young	County Attorney's Office

PUBLIC PORTION

There were no members of the public present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 15, 2013

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee McKay. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Dawson asked Colleen Hofmeister to give an update on the two RFEIs that were implemented. The RFEI (Request for Expressions of Interest) for the Smith Point Marina was the 2nd RFEI the county sought for development of this parcel. This latest RFEI was at the request of Legislator Browning because she feels that it is a viable option. Completed proposals were due last week and although some interest was shown

during the process, no actual proposals were received. The people who requested packets will be contacted to inquire what discouraged them from applying. Commissioner Dawson added that hundreds of mailings were sent out to notify the public of the RFEIs.

The 2nd RFEI is for Historic Structures. Individuals or businesses are being sought to renovate two county historic properties and then utilize them as a residence or a place of business. The party would be mandated to allow public use of the space on a regular basis. The RFEI was implemented and proposals were received. An Evaluation Committee will be meeting in the next few weeks to review the proposals. Trustees Alex McKay and Bill Sickles will represent the Parks Department on the Evaluation Committee because one of the parcels is in Elwood and the other is in Flanders.

The Parks Department is in the process of drafting an RFP (Request for Proposals) for a Computerized Reservation System. The current contract expires at the end of next year. The Parks Department is researching what other systems are currently available and being used by municipalities that offer camping, golf and marinas. A trustee will be asked to sit on the Evaluation Committee for this RFP in the near future.

Commissioner Dawson asked Nick Gibbons for an update on the outer beaches and piping plover activity this season. 2 ½ miles of the 5 mile outer beach at Smith Point is currently open for day tripping and it accommodates approximately 800 vehicles. Tomorrow, an additional mile of beach will be opened up for fishermen access only (surf casting) from cut 3 east to the inlet.

The entire piping plover season was very poor this year. Productivity was approximately one chick per pair at each site. Normal average productivity is 1.5 chicks per pair.

Cupsogue was recently reopened to the inlet. ¼ mile of the one mile beach had been closed to the public where the breach occurred. Plovers nested there and no driving was permitted. Once nesting ended, it was reopened. There is currently access from both sides of Moriches Inlet which is a major improvement from 6-8 weeks ago.

Shinnecock west is reopened. The Town of Southampton controls the access points and the county owns the beaches in between the access points. This creates management issues at times.

Shinnecock east had no issues. There was no plover nesting there and no closures of the outer beach.

Montauk was quite narrow this season and there were a few complaints about the number of parking spots available. There had been 50 spots originally and once the Park Supervisor confirmed that parking was sufficient and nobody was being turned away, Nick followed up with the beach buggy users. There is a formal area for both RV campers and beach buggy surf fishermen which is very wide and it accommodates all users.

Commissioner Dawson stressed that Nick is very proactive in keeping local fishermen and user groups informed and notified of any limited access on the outer beaches throughout the season.

Trustee White inquired how Long Island compares to Cape Cod with piping plover productivity. Nick reported that Long Island numbers are usually much worse because Cape Cod has mostly federal properties and they close them all to the general public. The Parks Department hired two additional seasonal employees this year, totaling 14 who worked on the beach 7 days a week and knew exactly how many and where plover nesting sites were located. Without cameras, it's sometimes impossible to know what predators are responsible for some of the losses. Depending on the location crows, gulls, cats and fox are known to be the culprits.

Legislator Schneiderman suggested that since the "Discover County Parks Day" event was not very successful due to rainy weather, holding the event again next year to encourage public use of Suffolk County Parks and possible increase in purchases of Green Key cards.

Legislator Schneiderman inquired if damages from Hurricane Sandy at Meschutt, Cupsogue and Smith Point have all been repaired. Commissioner Dawson stated that aside from the erosion problem, all of the structural damage was repaired by Memorial Day.

Legislator Schneiderman inquired if the lowering of golf fees for Veterans has been a success. Commissioner Dawson stated that figures appear to show an increase in usage by disabled Veterans and he plans to do a closer review to confirm this.

Legislator Schneiderman reported that a bill was just recently passed renaming a trail in the Town of Brookhaven after Ray Corwin, the former Chair of the Parks Trustees Board. He also expressed his ongoing concern about the completion of Third House and stated that there are funds in the budget for it so that it can once again be used for public assembly.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Borden inquired about the Bavarian Inn site. Commissioner Dawson reported that the building was scheduled to come down on Monday, September 23rd and that Legislator Kennedy has a bill on the table to make the parcel county parkland. He added also that the Islip, Brookhaven and Smithtown portions of Lake Ronkonkoma beach were frequently closed during the summer due to algae and high bacteria counts.

ROUND TABLE

Trustee Sickles congratulated Chairman Borden on the great article written in Newsday about the Kings Park Fire Department and the tribute to Miles for 60 years of service to the department.

Trustee Hopkins was pleased to announce that the Towns of Smithtown, Islip and Brookhaven have passed a resolution to join in with the memorandum of agreement understanding for the Lake Ronkonkoma Watershed Inter-Municipal Organization. The next step will be to have the county vote it in, and then it will be a viable group to study the water quality of Lake Ronkonkoma. This program includes towns and communities working together jointly which creates a greater chance for grant funding from the state.

Richard Martin reported on the status of current National Register applications. The county is currently working with the Yaphank Historic Society to apply for the Mary Booth House in Yaphank to be entered on the National Register. The county is also working with the Moriches Bay Historical Society on the Terrell River County Park National Register application. This one includes Indian archeology sites that were found there in the mid-1990s so it has already been declared eligible by New York State and the county is now following up on the documentation that is needed to proceed. The Montauk County Park inventory of archeological items found at the village there is still being worked on. Once it is completed, the application with the National Register will resume. The entire Montauk County Park has already been declared eligible for the National Register but all of the information needed has not yet been completed to proceed with the nomination.

Trustee McKay inquired as to the benefits of being on the National Register and Richard reported that aside from the recognition that is achieved, it provides the eligibility of grant programs. Both the county and the partner groups can receive and benefit from these grants. With historic grants, most state and national grant programs require that a site first be on the National Register.

Legislator Schneiderman reported that Montauk had a good summer and collected approximately one-third of the county's total hotel taxes. A portion of the hotel taxes collected goes toward historic preservation. He stated that there is a significant amount of money that should be coming to the Parks Department due to an underestimation of how much money has actually been collected. Some of that money is specifically

earmarked and must go to historic preservation. \$1 million of hotel tax money collected was under projected in 2012 and closer to \$2 million was under projected in 2013. Some of the money goes to groups like the Long Island Convention of Visitors and it must go to the specific groups it is earmarked for. A clear accounting of the amount that has been collected will be researched and determined.

Legislator Schneiderman announced that the county purchased a parcel of property in Flanders, called Cat Cove. It is located on the Peconic River and the Town of Southampton recently applied to the state for a \$1 million grant to build a pedestrian bridge that crosses over the Peconic River and into a Suffolk County park. There is also a separate grant that was just approved to build a trail from that bridge back to Route 24. The goal is to build a beautiful waterfront park in this area. The Riverside area is blighted with boarded up storefronts and the Town of Southampton has an economic revitalization plan for the area that includes the waterfront park, the re-engineering of the traffic circle and the sewer district.

Trustee Cardillo was in agreement with the plans for the Riverside area. He also reported that Indian Island's camp grounds and golf course are doing well.

Commissioner Dawson reported that camping on a whole stayed about equal this season, golf was down due to rainy weather, heat & the economy, and marina revenue was stable. Outer beach permits were down somewhat this season due to the anticipated limited access.

Trustee McKay commented that some issues don't come before the Trustees because they are no longer in their purview and their role has become greatly diminished and mostly advisory.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee McKay. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.